

Scheduled Public Hearings, 6:00 p.m.

47. First Public Hearing on Tentative Millage Rates and Budgets for Fiscal Year 2004/2005

Pursuant to legal advertisement, a public hearing was conducted.

This item involves the adoption of the tentative Countywide, Emergency Medical Services MSTU, and Primary Health Care MSTU millage rates and budgets for Fiscal Year 2004-2005. The Chairman announced that the proposed aggregate millage rate is 9.2600 mills which is 7.3 percent over the aggregate roll back millage rate of 8.6328 mills is due to the following: provision of emergency medical services, maintenance of high level county-wide service provisions, continued Capital Improvement projects programming funding, enhanced support of law enforcement and development of a women's health center.

County Attorney Thiele announced that the proposed Countywide millage rate is 8.54 mills which is 6.1 percent over the countywide rollback millage rate 8.0491 mills. The Primary Healthcare MSTU is 0.2200 mill which is 94.7 percent over the Primary Health Care MSTU rollback millage rate of 0.1130 mills. The proposed emergency medical services MSTU millage rate is 0.5000 mills which is 6.2 percent over the Emergency Medical Services MSTU rollback millage rate of 0.4707 mills.

Mr. Thiele explained that there are two discussion items to be brought up by the County Administrator and following that, the Board will adopt a series of resolutions.

Alan Rosenzweig, Director of Office of Management and Budget, explained that there are two additional funding requests: one is a request for funding for the construction of a Women's Dorm at the Planned Housing Opportunities and Personal Empowerment (HOPE) Community for \$260,000 (a portion of the funding would go the homeless shelter/air conditioning). The second funding request was from Apalachee Center for \$204,000 to help fund 10 additional beds at the Crisis Stabilization Unit.

The following appeared:

Ron Kirkland, 4511 Dover Road, Havana, Florida, CEO of Apalachee Center, requested that the Board support the request for \$204,000 because he feels that the County is legally obligated to fund Baker Act services for citizens of Leon County. He stated that for the past 25 years, Apalachee Center has provided services for the mentally ill in partnership with the County. Mr. Kirkland explained that the legislature has funded 75% of the funding for the Crisis Stabilization Unit beds for the additional ten beds and the County would be funding the remaining 25% (\$204,000). If the County does not provide the funding, Apalachee would not receive the 75% funding from the legislature. Mr. Kirkland responded to the Board's inquiries, explaining the location of the beds and the operating costs.

Kay Freeman, 4126 Arklow Drive, appeared representing the Tallahassee Coalition for the Homeless and explained that at full build-out the Women's Dorm would house 32 women. She requested the Board's support.

Reverend Thomas Dohrman, 1527 Bellview Drive, Board Chairman for the Tallahassee Coalition for the Homeless, spoke on behalf of the HOPE Community and urged the

Board to provided funding.

Chuck Mitchell, 3890 Tan Mouse Road, explained that the Coalition for the Homeless involves about 45 social service agencies in town that try to assist the homeless. They have worked on a collaborative effort to design the building and the cost of the campus is 4.5 million. Mr. Mitchell explained that they have raised over \$3.2 million from federal, state, city, and private individuals, and requested the County's support.

Commissioner Thael pointed out that it is the County's priority to get the mentally ill out of detention facilities and place them in a crisis stabilization facility in hopes of that they can be treated and return to a more productive, independent, and normal life style. He explained that taxpayers are paying over \$250,000 yearly for medications at the jail for mental illnesses. Commissioner Thael supported funding for this endeavor and pointed out that this is an opportunity to start to turn around an inefficient system. He stated that he would like to have further discussions on how to fund such a change.

Commissioner Grippa indicated that he would like to view the facility where the additional beds would be placed and voiced concern that the other seven counties would be using the beds designated for Leon County residents. He also voiced concern about where the money would come from, i.e., would it be taken from other agencies and would taxes be increased if Apalachee Center beds are funded. Mr. Kirkland explained that Leon County is only charged based on the residents of Leon County using those beds and a monthly report is provided. It was noted that County staff had viewed the facility over the last few weeks.

Joe Sharp, Director of Health and Human Services, responded to the Board's inquiries and stated that historically Leon County has used some 61% of the beds at Apalachee Center.

Staff noted that the County contracts for services with Apalachee Center and the amount increases yearly according to the CPI.

Chairman Sauls pointed out that discussions about these two funding requests should have occurred in July during a budget workshop rather than waiting till this late date in the process.

Commissioner Proctor moved, duly seconded by Commissioner Winchester and carried 6 – 1 (Commissioner Grippa voted in opposition), to provide funding in the amount of \$204,366 to Apalachee Center.